

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6713

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 1775

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MASS, SO, US, ET

SUBJECT: SOMALI MINISTER CITES INTERNAL DANGERS; IMPLIES RESTRAINT
OF INSURGENCY IF WESTERN SUPPORT WERE FORTHCOMING

SUMMARY: THE HIGHLY ARTICULAR MINISTER OF MINERALS AND SOMETIME SPECIAL EMISSARY OF THE GSDR PRESENTED A CONGENT SUMMARY OF THE SOMALI CAUSE DURING A LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS ON AUGUST 1. KASSIM ARGUED THAT LACK OF WESTERN SUPPORT IMPERILS THE PRESENT GSDR, AND ASSERTED A SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT WOULD TURN TO THE SOVIET UNION. HE SAID HE COULD NOT, HOWEVER, FORESEE THE GSDR FOLLOWING A RADICALLY DIFFERENT COURSE THAN IT PURSUES AT THE PRESENT. HE ATTEMPTED TO CONVEY THE IDEA THAT WITH WESTERN SUPPORT THE GSDR WOULD BE ABLE TO BETTER RESTRAIN THE INSURGENTS, BUT WOULD NOT BE EXPLICIT ON THIS POINT. END SUMMARY.

1. CHARGE AND EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER CALLED ON MINISTER OF MINERALS AND WATER RESOURCES HUSSEIN ABDULKADIR KASSIM AUGUST 1 TO DISCUSS SELF-HELP FUNDS FOR A SOLAR DESALINIZATION PROJECT. FOLLOWING THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSION, THE MINISTER WHO WAS A MEMBER OF PRESIDENT SIAD'S PARTY WHICH TRAVELLED TO PARIS, CONFIDENTIAL

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BAGHDAD, KHARTOUM, AND JIDDA GAVE HIS VIEWS ON THE TRIP AND CURRENT ASPECTS OF SOMALI FOREIGN POLICY. KASSIM IS ONE OF THE MORE ARTICULATE YOUNG SOMALI MINISTERS AND HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN EMPLOYED ON DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (GSDR).

2. THE MINISTER SAID HE THOUGHT THE TRIP TO FRANCE WAS USEFUL.

HE SAID HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS DEFENSE TOPICS WHICH HAD BEEN CONSIDERED THERE, BUT BELIEVED THE GSDR HAS SECURED COMMITMENTS FROM THE FRENCH IN THE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AREA WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE TRIP. MOREOVER, HE SAID THE CONTACT BETWEEN FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD AND PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE WAS BOUND TO BE HELPFUL IN THE FUTURE.

3. KASSIM CALLED THE BAGHDAD TRIP ESSENTIALLY CEREMONIAL. HE SAID THAT SOMALIA AND IRAQ UNDERSTOOD ONE ANOTHER'S POSITIONS. THE GSDR WAS PLEASED THAT THE IRAQIS WERE MOVING TO ESTABLISH A MORE INDEPENDENT POSITION, BUT THE PURPOSE OF THE JOURNEY WAS NOT TO PREACH AN ANTI-SOVIET LINE IN BAGHDAD. THE GSDR IS SATISFIED THAT IRAQI SUPPORT TO THE ERITREANS WILL CONTINUE.

4. THE MINISTER INSISTED THINGS HAD GONE REASONABLY WELL FOR THE GSDR AT THE OAU MEETINGS IN KHARTOUM. HE SAID THE SOMALIS WERE MIFFED BY OBASANJO'S STATEMENT THAT NIGERIA HAD SECURED A COMMITMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES THAT IT WOULD NOT INTERFERE IN THE SITUATION IN THE HORN. THAT SEEMED ONE-SIDED TO US OBSERVED KASSIM. ON THE OTHER HAND KASSIM ASSERTED THAT THERE WAS NO CONCERTED MOVE BY THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STATES TO VILIFY SOMALI. KASSIM SAID THAT ONLY THE ETHIOPIANS WERE OUTSPOKENLY ANTI-SOMALI. EVEN THE KENYANS, HE REMARKED, WERE QUITE, AND THE GSDR APPRECIATED THAT. KASSIM ASSERTED THAT IN THEIR CORRIDOR CONVERSATIONS MANY AFRICAN DIPLOMATS REFLECTED APPREHENSION REGARDING THE SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE

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IN AFRICA, BUT HE SAID THAT INTERVENTION IN SHABA HAD BALANCED THE SCALE AND MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A CONSENSUS CONDEMNING SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA. THE MINISTER CONCLUDED THAT HAD THE US TAKEN A STRONG STAND ON SOVIET PRESENCE, AFRICANS WOULD HAVE BEEN EMBOLDENED TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE SOVIETS. BUT THE AFRICANS ARE TIMID, HE SAID, AND FEAR THEY WILL GET NO SUPPORT IF THEY TAKE AN ANTI-SOVIET POSITION. (KASSIM'S THEME WAS ECHOED AGAIN IN A POST-DINNER CONVERSATION THAT SAME EVENING AMONG PARTY BUREAU CHIEFS AHMED MOHAMED MAHAMUD, IBRAHIM MEGAG SAMATAR, VISITING ICA SPEAKER WILLIAM GRIFFITH, AND THE CHARGE.)

5. CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT KASSIM COULD NOT HAVE IT BOTH WAYS. IT WAS ILLOGICAL TO CONDEMN THE US FOR FAILURE TO INTERVENE IN THE HORN BUT FOR SUPPORTING THE SHABA OPERATION. KASSIM ASSERTED THE SUBJECTS WERE RELATED BUT NOT PARALLEL. THE US, HE SAID, SHOULD HAVE SELECTED A MORE APPROPRIATE THEATER FOR AN AFRICAN INTERVENTION.

6. KASSIM THEN ASKED HOW THE EMBASSY PERCEIVED THE SECURITY RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPING WITH SOMALIA, CHARGE SAID THE USG HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN THE OGADEN WAS

A MAJOR HURDLE TO THE MOVEMENT. KASSIM SAID THIS WAS REGRETABLE FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. HE SAID THE LIBERATION FRONTS HAD EXTERNAL SOURCES OF SUPPLY, THAT THEY WERE NOT SUBJECT TO DIRECTION FROM MOGADISCIO, AND THAT ANY ATTEMPTS TO MAKE THEM MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE GSDR WERE COMPLICATED BY THE NINE MONTHS OF FREEDOM THEY HAD ENJOYED WHEN MOST OF THE OGADEN WAS LIBERATED TERRITORY. IT IS MUCH HARDER TO POLICE THEM NOW THAN IT WAS EARLIER KASSIM ASSERTED. THE MINISTER THEN SAID THAT THE LACK OF RESPONSE BY THE WEST AND THE US TO THE GSDR'S NEEDS POSED A THREAT TO SIAD. KASSIM SAID THE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY WAS NOT HAPPY ABOUT ITS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OGADEN AND ITS PRESENT ILL-EQUIPPED CONDITION. ARMY OFFICERS, HE CAUTIONED, WERE LIABLE TO TAKE THINGS AGAIN INTO THEIR OWN HANDS AND DEPOSE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THESE JUNIORS WOULD INEVITABLY
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TURN TO THE SOVIETS FOR RELIEF FROM THEIR FRUSTRATIONS SINCE THEY RECALL THAT THE SOVIET UNION DID PROVIDE THE ARMY WITH TOOLS TO FIGHT. THE SNA, HE SAID, IS HUMILIATED AND EMBARRASSED BY ETHIOPIAN ATTACKS ON SOMALIA TO WHICH IT CANNOT RESPOND. THIS SITUATION MAKES OFFICERS DESPERATE HE ADDED.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE.

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 1775

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7. WHEN THE CHARGE SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE MORE SENSIBLE FROM EVERY POINT OF VIEW TO WORK TOWARD THE REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE OGADEN KASSIM SAID HE COULD APPRECIATE THAT APPROACH, BUT THAT THE INSURGENTS THEMSELVES COULD NOT. THEY WERE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE THEIR FIGHT AND WOULD DO SO WITH OR WITHOUT ANY SUPPORT FROM THE GSDR. AFTER ALL, KASSIM SAID, THE INSURGENTS CAN ALSO MAKE TROUBLE FOR US AND HAVE DONE SO IN THE PAST. THE MINISTER HINTED, BUT WOULD NOT SAY OUTRIGHT, THAT IF PRESENT SIAD ENJOYED MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE WEST AND FELT HIMSELF STRONGER HE WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CONTROL THE INSURGENTS. KASSIM SAID THAT AS AN OGADENI HIMSELF HE COULD NEVER SEE THE GSDR TAKING A RADICALLY DIFFERENT POLICY THAN IT PURSUED AT PRESENT. THERE IS NO WAY, HE SAID, THAT THE GSDR CAN DIVORCE ITSELF FROM THE CAUSE OF ITS KINSMEN IN THE OGADEN. HE ADMITTED IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO REDUCE THE VIOLENCE AND THAT THE GSDR MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXERCISE A MORE PACIFIC INFLUENCE, BUT HE COULD NOT SEE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT DOING MORE THAN THAT.

8. IN THE SAME POST-DINNER CONVERSATION DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 4 PARTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU CHIEF IBRAHIM ASSERTED THAT THE LEVEL OF INSURGENCY MUST BE MAINTAINED AT THE PRESENT
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LEVEL IN ORDER TO CONSERVE SOMALI LIVES IN THE AREA. HE SAID WERE THE INSURGENTS TO SCALE DOWN THEIR EFFORTS, THE ETHIOPIAN GARRISONS WOULD THEN FEEL SECURE ENOUGH TO LEAVE THEIR FORTIFIED TOWNS AND TAKE THE LARGE SCALE REPRISALS AGAINST SOMALI RESIDENTS.

9. KASSIM'S ARGUMENTS ARE AN ACCURATE SUMMARY OF THE POSITION PUT TO THE USG BY SOMALI SPOKESMEN OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS. HE IS PERSONALLY MORE FLEXIBLE THAN MOST GADR ADVOCATES, BUT THE ESSENTIAL POSITION IS THE SAME. HIS ARGUMENT THAT LACK OF WESTERN SUPPORT THREATENED THE VERY POSITION OF THE PRESENT GSDR WAS ONE OF THE MOST EXPLICIT ASSERTIONS OF THAT TYPE WE HAVE HEARD. WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO WHAT THE GSDR MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO TO RESTRAIN THE INSURGENCY IF THE GSDR DID INDEED HAVE SECURITY SUPPORT FROM THE WEST, KASSIM VACILLATED. HE WAS CLEARLY UNWILLING TO STATE THAT THE GSDR WOULD RESTRAIN ITS INSURGENT COUSINS IF THE GSDR HAD WESTERN SUPPORT, BUT HE ATTEMPTED TO CONVEY THIS IMPRESSION.
VOUGHT

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED.

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